

Why Is Base Stealing on the Decline? Shooting—Pugilism

Many Reasons For Retrogression of Modern Base Runners--International Rifle Match--Attell a Nerveless Champion

WHY is base stealing on the decline in the big leagues? Any person who answers this question correctly will stop a vast amount of conjecture among the baseball moguls.

As a matter of fact, the actual official records show a falling off in base stealing in the American and National leagues were lower than usual. The year before the same condition existed. Thus

for this season there has been a falling off below even the figures of 1906 and 1905. The principal reason advanced by the green diamond critics amounts to this: "The pitchers have paid more attention to base runners and have developed to its full extent the science of holding men along to the bases." Other space snatchers say the players—that is, the runners—themselves are to blame, claiming that the great demand for players has made them indifferent when undue exertion is called for.

Another reason advanced is that the improvement in catching gloves has enabled catchers to handle pitched balls better and so to get them away more quickly. A western diamond crank avers that the moving of the

pitcher back toward second base is the cause of the trouble, his argument being that the farther back the twirler's box was moved the better and the easier he could watch a man on first base. Also his throw to second thus became a very simple matter in attempting to catch men playing off too far toward third. While this talk is logical, it does not apply to the last decade, as it was about ten years ago that the distance between pitcher's box and home plate was lengthened to sixty feet, five inches. Prior to that change the distance was fifty-five feet.

Still More Arguments.

There are other reasons that could be advanced to account for the decline, admitting that the players of today run just as fast, if not faster, than those of the immediate past. For instance, the number of left handed pitchers has increased, and it is harder to steal on a southpaw than on a right hander. The former faces first base during almost his entire delivery. Then, again, team captains have paid greater attention to catching base runners than heretofore. The infielders are trained and trained and trained some more in the ancient art of entrapping base stealers and daring runners.

In this connection one should not overlook the fact that catchers and pitchers have developed better team work, as respects themselves, of late years. The task of the base purloiner is too difficult to be pleasant when he is confronted by a battery that has practiced faithfully the most approved methods of leading a runner on to the flyover.

Probably there is no one reason in particular why base stealing has degenerated. More likely the decline is the result of a combination of circumstances, a combination of the causes afore related.

International Rifle Contest.

The executive committee of the National Rifle Association of America, at a recent meeting held at the offices of the association, 259 Broadway, New York, decided the manner of the tests for places on the rifle team, which will represent the United States in the international contest for the Palma trophy, which will be held at the Rockcliffe range, Ottawa, Canada, Sept. 7.

Preliminary to taking up the subject applications for life membership were received and the following were unanimously elected: Seth Low, ex-mayor of New York; Charles J. Bonaparte, attorney general of the United States; Robert Bacon, assistant secretary of state, and Mortimer L. Schiff, the New York banker. The second regiment of Georgia and the third regiment of Michigan were elected to affiliated membership.

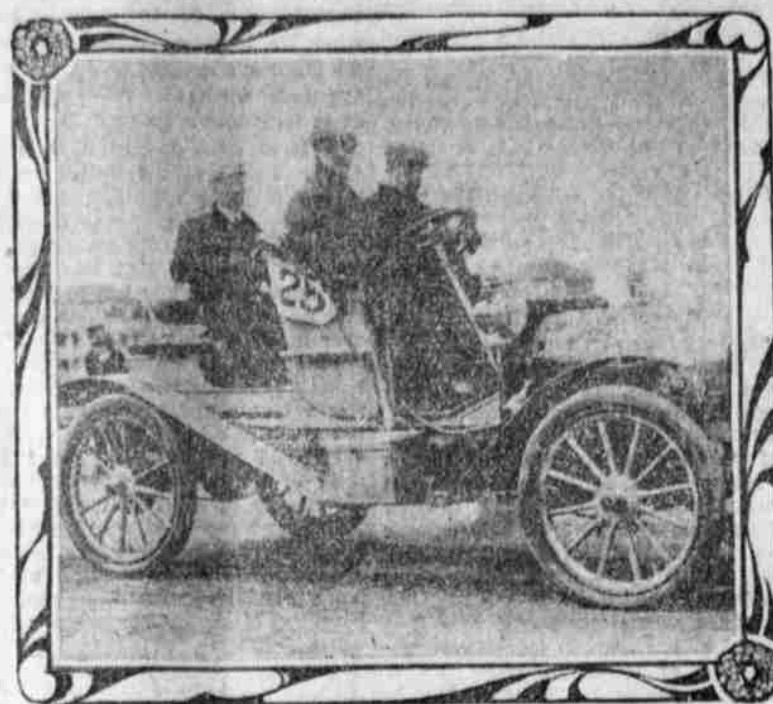
The international match was then taken up, and Lieutenant Colonel N. B. Thurston of New York was appointed the captain of the team. Colonel Thurston is well qualified for this position, having been the captain of the victorious New York state team for many years.

The team will be selected in the following manner: First—A preliminary contest will be held at the new Ohio range at Fort Clinton on Aug. 16 and 17. Those desiring to enter this contest will furnish a statement from the adjutant general of his state or any competent authority that he has during the present year attained a record in practice or competition of 95 per cent at 300 yards, 90 per cent at 500 yards and 85 per cent at 1,000 yards in a string of consecutive shots.

Second—In addition to the scores made in the above two days' contest, there will be added those scores made in the Wimbledon cup match, the Leech cup match and the President's match, all matches of the National Rifle association which will be shot on the Ohio range during the week beginning Aug. 18.

From the aggregate of all those scores the team will be selected—nine on the basis of high aggregate and three selected by the executive committee, making twelve in all, four of whom will be alternates.

The eight men who will shoot in the match will be selected by the team captain, after preliminary practice in Canada. The team, after being selected on the evening of Aug. 24, will be



JOHN HAYNES, IN AUTO, MAKING PERFECT SCORE IN ENDURANCE RUN.

Haynes, in the above big "runabout" (at the steering wheel), finished in the recent three day endurance run of the New Jersey Auto and Motor club with a perfect record.

assembled and trained on the Ohio range the week of Aug. 26 to 31 and will be taken to the Canada range in time to allow of four days' preliminary practice there.

The necessary funds to defray the expenses of the team will be raised by public subscription and will be received at the association's office and by the team captain.

In the preliminary trials the contestants will use their own rifles, but new rifles will be supplied the team by the National Rifle association to be used in the match.

Attell refused Little Neil. Abe Attell refused Little Neil's challenge to a finish bout for the featherweight championship. Attell is not only a coward, but he is clumsy in his explanations and excuses. This last offense is generally conceded to be greater than the former.

Attell's announced excuse is that Neil would not draw a big house in a match with Attell. But the Italian's real excuse is that he is afraid of Neil, and Neil weighs many pounds less than Attell. Attell fights at about 125. Frankie Neil fights at about 115. Twenty pounds difference counts vastly more among small scrappers than it does among big ones. Neil's disadvantage as opposed to Attell is so great that the Italian's backwardness

is most difficult to explain on any other ground than sheer cowardice.

Attell later stated that he much preferred to meet Walter Little of Chicago in a match at Indianapolis.

Little is described by Attell as "the best 124 pounder Chicago ever turned out." But Attell is as good a press agent for his opponents as he is for himself—when his opponents are easy marks.

HARRY GRANT.

TEAM RACING AT CLEVELAND.

New York amateur drivers are not alone in their efforts to make trotting team races a feature of their season's sport, both on the Speedway and Empire City track, as there is the same talk at Cleveland among the members of the Gentlemen's Driving club of introducing team races, both trotting and pacing, at the summer matinees. The leading members believe that this innovation would certainly prove a drawing card and furnish some excellent sport.

They believe that team racing should be revived and made a part of the amateur sport, as it was several decades ago in professional races, and that this feature will draw into the ranks of gentlemen drivers prominent members, besides making the game attractive to the general public.

While few of the members are of the opinion that the trotting and pacing team records against time can be reduced or beaten, yet pairs owned in Cleveland are considered fast enough to make a good showing against that record in an actual race, which is now held at 2:15 1/4 by Sally Simmons, 2:13 1/4, and Roseleaf, 2:14 1/4, driven over the Columbus track in 1904. The pacing team record was made in 1900 by Charles B. 2:07 1/4, and Bobby Hal in 2:13.

Both of these records against time are now held by C. K. G. Billings, who in 1904 drove The Monk, 2:05 1/4, and Equity, 2:12 1/4, a mile in 2:07 1/4 over the Memphis track.

OPERA COMPANY FOR BOSTON.

Henry Russell of London, manager of the San Carlos Opera company, which recently completed a highly successful tour of the United States, giving grand opera at popular prices, announced before his departure that arrangements were nearing completion for the permanent location of the company in Boston.

Mrs. John L. Gardner and other wealthy persons whose names Mr. Russell does not wish to give at present are interested in the enterprise.

SLIM PROSPECTS OF A RACE.

The prospects of a sculling race between Jim Wray, the Harvard rowing coach, and Durnan, the Toronto scullerman, for the professional championship of America, appear to be very slight at present. Wray cannot race Durnan before October at the earliest, and as the latter expects to be in Australia by that time there appears to be no chance for the much discussed contest.

AUTOGRAPH IS PRIZED

SIGNATURE OF W. T. VERNON IN GREAT DEMAND.

As Much as \$10,000 Has Been Paid for One of Them—Craving Is Universal—Secret of Their Great Value.

Washington.—Ten thousand dollars seems a fabulous price to pay for an autograph, yet men who can get for nothing the autograph of the greatest potentates on earth will willingly exchange that amount in gold for the signature of William T. Vernon of the United States.

Collectors of the signatures of famous men, who will pay high prices for single specimens of those of George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte or Oliver Cromwell, feel their ambition realized if they can connect with one of each, but for the autograph of Vernon they have a hunger that ends only with death.

And the hunger is universal. Men and women who ordinarily care nothing for the autographs craved by collectors will exchange their all for those of Vernon. Lives are spent in drudgery, men will die, cheat, steal, fight, kill and brave all death in a thousand ways with no hope and no purpose save that of acquiring as



WILLIAM T. VERNON.
(Negro Whose Signature Is in Very Great Demand.)

many as possible of these signatures.

Vernon is in the autograph business. He makes his living by putting his name on paper. He caters to a clientele that is insatiable. His signatures are all alike, but vary in price from \$1 to \$10,000, according to the paper on which they are written. Still, no one ever tries to beat him down, for the \$10,000 kind is ten thousand fold more desirable than the \$1 kind.

Who is this man Vernon and what is the secret of the great value of his autograph? Those who have a gold or a silver certificate or a national bank note issued by Uncle Sam subsequent to June, 1906, may answer this question by looking at the neat, businesslike signature on the lower left-hand corner, just over the words "Register of the Treasury." This is Vernon, William T. Vernon, the man without whose name Uncle Sam's paper currency and bonds would not pass muster in the world's financial hopper.

It mustn't be supposed that Vernon puts his "fat" to every bank or treasury note that is issued. If he were a million times multiplied he would have a hard time doing that. His name is engraved upon a plate from one of several samples which he furnished, and this signature is stamped upon the notes by the wonderful presses at the bureau of engraving and printing, which are grinding out money day and night in a vain attempt to keep pace with the abounding prosperity of the country.

But there is work for the register to do, nevertheless. He must sign by hand every registered bond of the United States, and millions and millions of dollars' worth of these have been issued since he took the oath of office in June, 1906. These range in value between \$100 and \$10,000, the usual denomination being \$1,000. Vernon has signed hundreds of the \$10,000 bonds with the same easy nonchalance that he would write his name to be engraved for a \$1 bill.

He was born 35 years ago in a log cabin on a plantation near Lebanon, Mo., of parents who had been slaves. He went to work in the fields dragging hay at the age of eight. When 15 years of age he began his education at a school for negroes in Missouri, finishing his course of study at 15. He taught school in Missouri for six years, and then took charge of Western university, a school for negroes at Quindaro, Kan.

Mr. Vernon was then the only teacher, and his pupils numbered 35. When he left the institution last June he had 14 teachers and 250 pupils. The college property consists of 130 acres of land, with buildings valued at \$175,000.

He is affiliated with leading negro organizations, has had the degree of master of arts and doctor of laws conferred upon him, and as an educator, an orator, a writer and a leader of the people up to the light of a higher plane of life, he is classed with the famous teachers of Tuskegee.

Francis Macmillen, Stellar American Violinist—Stage Talk



(From Our New York Dramatic Correspondent.)

AMERICA at last seems to have produced its long looked for violin virtuoso. For years, in fact since the development of music on this side of the Atlantic, critics and the American public have seen the Poles, the Hungarians, the Germans, the Scandinavians and, in fact, representatives of nearly every foreign country come and go, leaving behind them artistic success and taking with them thousands of dollars of American cash. It was only natural, therefore, that his fellow countrymen should have given a warm welcome to Francis Macmillen, the young American violinist who first drew his bow in this country last December. For Macmillen is a really brilliant player, who, it is not difficult

to believe, will be considered "the American violin virtuoso."

His Tour Last Season.

If the opinions of critics are worth anything, Macmillen's future is assured. For once, critical opinion has coincided with that of the multitude. Macmillen's tour of the United States last year was a pronounced success. His reception throughout the country was most cordial.

The recent announcement that Macmillen is to tour this country again next season and that he will also play in the leading Canadian cities has inspired great interest. Although Macmillen will be but twenty-two years of age when he arrives in America next fall, his career covers seventeen years of study, travel and playing as a violin virtuoso. He has toured many of the

leading countries of Europe. Eleven years were spent abroad, and not in that length of time did he set foot on his native shores until his arrival in New York last November. His debut concert at Carnegie hall and subsequent appearances in Boston, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Washington, Columbus, Indianapolis, Chicago, St. Louis and, in fact, all of the leading cities of the east and middle west, made for him at once the reputation of being one of the greatest violin virtuosos America has ever produced. He played in nearly a hundred concerts.

Imposing Plans For 1907-08.

Next year he is to be heard in 150 concerts. His territory will extend from Boston to Denver and from Duluth to New Orleans. One of Macmillen's recent successes has been ac-

quired in London, where he gave three recitals in succession at Queen's hall, the large amphitheater being packed to its capacity at each concert. English critics rank Macmillen over almost every artist who has appeared there this season, which of itself is sufficient to brand him as an artist of great merit, especially when it is known that such players as Kreisler and Rubink had appeared the same season.

In Macmillen's native city, Marietta, O., the young artist was accorded an ovation when he arrived there last January after an absence of eleven years.

Five thousand enthusiastic citizens met him at the station and escorted him to the courthouse steps, from which, despite the cold weather, he played "Home, Sweet Home."

A score of students unblinded the

horses from the artist's carriage and, attaching a rope to it, drew him through the streets of the town in a triumphal procession to his old home.

Macmillen will tour under the direction of Hansel & Jones, the New York managers.

Another Bloodless Stage Fracas.

The list of stage quarrels has been augmented by another picturesque episode. There is no cause to wonder at the absence of a delegate from Stage-land to the recent international peace convention at The Hague. This latest temperamental clash between histrions became known to the public recently when Joseph Bigelow, the grotesque comedian and librettist, resigned from the cast of "The Parisian Model" at the Broadway theater. Bigelow and the star, Anna Held, came to verbal blows over their respective roles and how they should be played. There had been friction over their joint scenes for some time. Mr. Bigelow maintained that Miss Held did not "play up to him" properly. Miss Held, being the star, part owner and wife of the play's manager and chief owner, stood pat and demurely (yes, quite) went on her way, playing her role as she pleased. Her relation to Bigelow was like that of the president to a fourth class postmaster.

Bigelow finally could stand the situation no longer and in high dudgeon stalked forth into the sizzling night air one evening before the performance was over firmly resolved never to return, nev-a-a-l-i-t-e-r-r! "She does not respond to me, and she hurts my art," were his parting words to the perturbed guardian of the stage entrance, "he said."

Claude McKimley, his understudy, played Mr. Bigelow's role in his absence. Later Mr. Bigelow cooled down and evidently concluded that he would prefer to continue the necessary process of eating real food. An actor out of work does not take on much avoidance during the intermittent dry seasons of the drama. On passing a lobster palace and seeing a half dozen friends therein devouring delicate tidbits he concluded that he had been unduly rash in segregating himself from the salary account. Whereupon, through his lawyer, he sent an apology to Miss Held, saying, "I must have been crazy." He was then welcomed back to the company and resumed his role.

Latest reports state that Mr. Bigelow is now eating regularly.

Joseph Coyne.
A London dramatic writer cables as follows:
"Joe Coyne is now free, as 'Nelly'

Neil' has come to an end. He is at present the subject of many rumors. It is most likely, however, that he will 'sign' with George Edwards, who wants him for the comedian part in "The Gay Widow," which he is getting ready to put on at Daly's. Should Coyne do so and follow up his success at the Aldwych his fate will be sealed. He will be a fixture before he knows it, thus following in the footsteps of Eugene Stratton, Paul Arthur, R. G. Knowles, Frank Mills, Walter Hampden and other clever American actors, not to mention actresses, who came over originally to play short engagements and have now settled down here for good and all."

Frederick Tringella

COMEDIAN BEAT THE CABBIE.

Raymond Hitchcock, the comedian, who is now on a starring tour in the Richard Harding Davis musical play, "A Yankee Tourist," was invited as the guest of honor at the Country club, about five miles outside of San Francisco, after a performance. As Mr. Hitchcock knew from previous experience that a cabman would ask a fortune to carry him out to the club, he looked up the address of a physician near the theater, and after the close of the show he went around and rang the bell. The doctor opened the door personally, and Hitchcock said:

"Doctor, you're wanted immediately out near the Country club. Can you come right away?"

"Certainly, sir. Just step inside a moment while I phone for my auto. We'll be there in a jiffy."

It was a good five miles to the Country club. Just beyond stood a cluster of suburban homes.

"The yellow house on the left there," said Hitchcock as he got out of the machine. "By the way, I forgot to ask you the amount of your fee."

"Four dollars," said the doctor.

The comedian peeled off four \$1 bills and passed them to the doctor.

"That will be all, thank you, doctor. None of those picnic hackmen would take me out here for less than \$15."

ALFRED SUTRO.

Alfred Sutro, the English author of "The Walls of Jericho," in which James K. Hackett is starring, is one of the most interesting figures in the dramatic field of England today. His rise to distinction has been made in the last three years. He was intended for commercial life, but his own bent was for literature.